

WHAT IS THE YEAR 2000 ISSUE AND HOW WILL THE EDUCATION COMMUNITY BE AFFECTED?

The Year 2000 (Y2K) issue resulted from a common programming practice, begun in the 1960s, to represent dates with two digits instead of four (98 vs. 1998). This shorthand saved disk space and thus money. Unfortunately, because the first two digits of the year are omitted, computer programs assume that each date entry is a date in the 20th century.

The entire education community, including the Education Department's (ED) customers and service providers, faces the Year 2000 issue. School districts as well as postsecondary institutions that have not corrected the Y2K problem will likely experience potentially serious malfunctions in systems that handle student records, payroll and employee benefits, purchasing, and class scheduling.

In addition, ED and the education community need to work closely together to ensure that all data exchanges and other interfaces are Year 2000 compliant.

Immediate action is needed because addressing the Year 2000 issue requires significant lead-time and resources.

WHAT IS THE STATUS OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT'S YEAR 2000 PROJECT?

The Department has developed a process for bringing its mission-critical and non-mission-critical systems into compliance. All 14 of the mission-critical systems completed renovation, validation and implementation, including independent verification and validation, and have been phased into production.

All of the 161 noncritical systems administered by the Department were fully renovated, validated and implemented and have been phased into production. Although the work has been completed on all of the systems, the Department is rapidly expanding end-to-end testing, contingency planning and outreach.

TESTING

All of the Department's mission-critical systems will be thoroughly tested internally and with trading partners. Testing with postsecondary institutions is being conducted to coincide with their completion of Y2K renovations. ED established a schedule for testing beginning in the spring of 1999. The schedule is posted on ED's Y2K website at (www.ed.gov/y2k). Institutions successfully completing the testing receive special recognition on ED's website. ED will work closely with postsecondary institutions to provide as many testing opportunities as possible as these trading partners complete Y2K renovations later in the year.

CONTINGENCY PLANNING

ED has an aggressive business continuity and contingency planning (BCCP) effort that started last summer with ED applying the General Accounting Office's BCCP approach to its core business processes and related systems. Initial contingency plans for all core business processes and their related systems were completed and initially tested and reported to the Office of Management and Budget on March 31, 1999. Contingency plans for all noncritical systems were completed and initially tested at that time as well. Further testing and refining of all contingency plans is an ongoing effort. ED has made these plans available to the education community and the general public for comment by posting them on ED's website. Further refinements will be made based on this input.

ARE SCHOOLS AND POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS READY?

Over the past year, ED has been conducting assessments of the elementary/secondary and the postsecondary education communities' Y2K readiness. These assessments are an ongoing effort in which we are continuously updating our summaries as new data are received. In May, ED surveyed all school districts across the country. Over 3,500 school districts responded by either completing the web-based version of the survey or mailing in a paper version. The results of the survey revealed that less than half the school

districts that responded had a Y2K written plan. Only 28 percent of respondents said that all of their mission-critical systems are Y2K compliant. Fifty percent of the respondents said that they had finished developing contingency plans. A comprehensive report of the findings can be found on ED's website.

In addition, ED launched a survey of over 6,500 postsecondary institutions in mid-May. Over 30 percent of these institutions responded to the survey. The survey data revealed that approximately one third of the schools that responded reported that a written Y2K plan does not exist on their campuses. Only 30 percent of the respondents stated that all of their mission-critical systems are currently Y2K compliant. Sixty-three percent of the respondents reported that they had completed their contingency planning work. A comprehensive report of the postsecondary survey results can also be found on ED's website.

HELP AND INFORMATION

Electronic Mailboxes:

ED has established two mailboxes for Year 2000 questions and correspondence. They are located at: **Y2k@ed.gov** for issues involving elementary and secondary education and all other non-postsecondary education programs; and

ope_y2k@ed.gov for issues involving postsecondary education programs.

Hotline:

1-888-USA-4-Y2K

A hotline set up by the Federal Trade Commission for the general public to find information on Y2K related topics by economic sector.

Guides:

ED developed a Year 2000 Compliance Guide for elementary/secondary schools and school districts and a Year 2000 Readiness Kit for postsecondary institutions. They provide plans from other schools, as well as tools and resources that will enable the education community

to take the necessary steps to address the Year 2000 issue. To obtain a copy, contact our publication distributor at 1-877-4-EDPUBS. It is also accessible on ED's website in the "How To" section.

Web Pages:

General

U.S. Department of Education

(<http://www.ed.gov/y2k>) for information on the Department of Education's Year 2000 Project and guidance on preparing for the Year 2000.

The President's Council on Year 2000 Conversion

(<http://www.y2k.gov>) for a comprehensive Y2K website including useful web links and information for members of the entire education sector.

Vendor 2000 Data Base (EDS)

(<http://www.vendor2000.com>) includes a repository of over 129,000 vendors' hardware, software, and other specialized products, with their current Y2K compliance status.

NSTL

(http://www.nstl.com/html/nstl_y2k.html) provides information from a leading provider of testing services to business and industry. In addition, NSTL lists a large number of hardware vendors with their Y2K compliance status.

Elementary/Secondary Specific

Council of Great City Schools

(<http://www.cgcs.org/y2k12/>) for information on Year 2000 issues affecting the elementary and secondary community.

New York City Board of Education

(<http://www.nycenet.edu>) contains an online database of compliance information on educational hardware and software.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools

(<http://www.dade.k12.fl.us/admin/newy2k/default.html>) contains specific compliance issues by vendor, sample plans and community information.

Postsecondary Specific

EDUCAUSE Year 2000 Issues

(<http://www.educause.edu/issues/y2k.html>) provides information on the management and use of computational, network, and information resources in support of higher education.

PSU Year 2000

(<http://www.psu.edu/Year2000/links/links.html>) provides information on college and university Y2K websites prepared by the Pennsylvania State University. Some sites include comprehensive Y2K plans.



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**CHALLENGE FOR
AMERICA'S
EDUCATION
COMMUNITY**

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